DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 099 087 JC 750 028

AUTHOR	Martin, Fred H.
TITLE	Student Followup 1: Attrition Study.
INSTITUTION	Roane State Community Coll., Harriman, Tenn.
PUB DATE	74
NOTE	35p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.75 HC-$1.85 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	*Dropout Rate; Followup Studies; *Junior Colleges; Junior College Students; Measurement Instruments; *School Holding Power; *Student Characteristics; Student Opinion; *Withdrawal
IDENTIFIERS	Roane State Community College; Tennessee

ABSTRACT

At Roane State Community College, a student attrition study was designed to monitor the dropout and/or "stopout" rates. Data was taken from school records and a questionnaire was sent to the 238 students who were enrolled during fall quarter 1973, but did not return for winter quarter 1974. The responses from 198 students indicated that the college had an overall attrition rate of 25 percent. Part-time students were more likely to drop out than full-time students; many nonreturnees re-enrolled within two quarters; 25 percent were enrolled in another school, and 72 percent of the others planned to return to some school in the future. When the graduates, those in other schools, and those who plan to re-enroll are deleted, a real dropout rate of only about 5 percent remains. The main reasons cited for leaving were: (1) conflict between class and work schedules, (2) desire for full-time employment, (3) family obligations, and (4) lack of personal motivation. The survey instrument is appended. (MJK)

ED 099087

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

STUDENT FOLLOWUP I

ATTRITION STUDY

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

ROANE STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

SUMMER 1974

JC 750 028

PREFACE

This Student Followup I - Attrition Study was conducted to provide the college with data on students who attended RSCC briefly before leaving. It is the first of several followups which could usefully be conducted as RSCC matures. A Student Followup II - Graduate Study is planned for 1974-75, for example.

Appreciation is expressed to all those involved in the production of this study, including Anne Powers, Mary Foland, Edith Allen, and Rachel Scogin.

Fred H. Martin, Director
Institutional Research

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		PAGE
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
II.	RESEARCH DESIGN	2
III.	INTERPRETATION OF DATA	3
	Background Characteristics	3
	Survey Responses (Total Sample)	9
	Survey Responses (Transfer, Career, Undecided)	18
	Survey Responses (Day, Evening)	20
IV.	SUMMARY	22
V.	RECOMMENDATIONS	24
	REFERENCES	
	APPENDIX A	
	APPENDIX B	
	APPENDIX C	

I. INTRODUCTION

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Research on community colleges has revealed that a growing percentage of their student body is coming from the second, third, and fourth quartiles of their high school classes.[1] This situation results largely from "open door" admissions policies and a nationwide emphasis on some form of post-secondary education. This influx of low achievers has presented problems for most community colleges, since their programs and staff are often still tied to the practices and philosophies of four-year colleges and universities. While the community college claims to be a "teaching institution", it appears that it is failing to successfully cope with low achievers.[2] One indicator of this failure is the typically high attrition rate, often ranging between 50-75% per year.[3] Recent studies have determined, however, that many "dropouts" are actually only "stopouts" who intend to return to college when time, finances, etc. permit.[4]

This study was entitled an Attrition Study rather than a Dropout Study because of the erroneous connotations associated with the latter term. Many people who feel strongly about the community college movement and the students who attend them agree that these students tend to be, and have a right to be, "dropins".[5] In a ringing defense of this right to academic mobility, Ralph Hahn charges that community college administrators have become more concerned with the loss of F.T.E. than with the students involved, that subtly coercive programs have been established to turn withdrawals into persisters, that we have made the unwarranted assumption that education is the greatest possible good, that those who drop out are too often labeled as failures when research indicates that dropping out has little effect on the lives or careers of students , and that we should place the student's need for self-determination ahead of institutional needs for course and program completion.[6] In order to effectively monitor the "dropout" and/or "stopout" rates at Roane State,

this Student Attrition Study was designed and implemented. The purposes of the study were to determine:

1. Reasons for students leaving RSCC
2. The degree to which student educational needs and goals were met
3. The current status of former students
4. Their potential for re-enrollment
5. Their attitudes and opinions about RSCC
6. Their degree of academic success
7. The "real" RSCC dropout rate

II. RESEARCH DESIGN

In May, 1974 a group of 238 students were identified who had been enrolled at RSCC for credit courses during Fall quarter but had not returned for Winter quarter. After a systematic deletion process (described below), a population of 198 former students remained for study. Various background characteristics of these students were investigated, including the following:

1. County of Residence
2. High School Attended
3. Marital Status
4. Sex
5. Race
6. Age
7. Freshman, Sophomore, or Special Student

8. Hours Attempted

9. Hours Earned

10. Cumulative GPA

A survey instrument (Appendix A) was designed by the Office of Institutional Research, in conjunction with the administrative staff, counselors, and division chairmen. It was mailed on May 31, along with a cover letter (Appendix B) and a self-addressed prepaid envelope. On June 21 a second copy of the questionnaire was mailed, along with a second cover letter (Appendix C) and a self-addressed prepaid envelope, to those persons not answering the initial inquiry. By July 10, the final responses were in, totaling 90 completed questionnaires out of 183, making an acceptable return rate of 49%. It should be noted at this point that the validity of the responses is assumed, since there is no reason to believe that the non-respondents differ to a significant degree from the respondents. There is always that possibility, however, and this fact should be kept in mind when generalizing about the survey results. The responses were compiled and analyzed, with the results outlined below.

III. INTERPRETATION OF DATA

A. Background Characteristics

Table I represents the deletion process undertaken to eliminate those students about whom reasons for withdrawal were known.

TABLE I

	Full-time	Part-time	Total
Initial Non-returnees	117 (49%)	121 (51%)	238
- Academic Suspensions	4	1	5
- Disciplinary Dismissal	0	0	0
- Deceased	1	0	1
- Graduates	1	1	2
- Spring Quarter Returnees	17	15	32
	94 (47%)	104 (53%)	198
Returned Questionnaires (Wrong Address)			15
			183

The total attrition for Fall quarter was 238 out of 956 credit students or a 25% rate. Of these 238 non-returnees, 60 officially withdrew from school, which represents a 6% rate of official withdrawal. Forty-two percent (42%) of the 60 returned to RSCC either Winter or Spring Quarters, with the remaining 58% becoming part of the 198 non-returning population. More part-time than full-time students failed to return, and Table II represents the Chi-squared statistical analysis of the part-time/full-time nonreturnee ratio in relation to the overall ratio.

TABLE II

	Part-time	Full-time	Total
Group A) All Fall Qtr. Credit Students	352 (37%)	604 (63%)	956
Group B) Nonreturnee Credit Students	121 (51%)	117 (49%)	238
TOTAL	473	721	1194

There is a statistically significant relationship (at .01 level) between attrition and course load at RSCC, with part-time students being more likely to withdraw than full-time students. A consideration of the reasons for withdrawal (pages 10-13) help explain this phenomenon.

After the deletions, the final sample consisted of 198 students (21% of the total credit enrollment), with 53% being part-time and 47% being full-time students. It is interesting to note that 13% (32 of 238) of the nonreturnees did return for Spring quarter, indicating that there is a trend to "stopout" for brief periods of time during one's community college education. It is only through an analysis such as the one undertaken here that a true measure of attrition can be established.

As mentioned before, several background characteristics were investigated to determine the presence or absence of a relationship between attrition and these factors. Table III shows the data on racial characteristics.

Table III

	Negro	Caucasian	Unclassified	Total
Group A) All Fall Qtr. Credit Students	29 (3.1%)	886 (96.0%)	8 (.9%)	923
Group B) Nonreturnee Credit Students	7 (3.5%)	190 (95.9%)	1 (.6%)	198
TOTAL	36	1076	9	1121

The derivation of a Chi-squared statistic reveals no significant difference in attrition rates by race. Table IV summarizes the data concerning sex distribution.

TABLE IV

	Male	Female	Total
Group A) All Fall Qtr. Credit Students	592 (62%)	364 (38%)	956
Group B) Nonreturnee Credit Students	129 (65%)	69 (35%)	198
TOTAL	721	433	1154

The derivation of a Chi-squared statistic for this data shows no relationship between sex and attrition for these students. Table V tabulates the data regarding high school attended.

TABLE V

	Rockwood	RCHS	Harriman	Oak Ridge	Spring City	Oliver Springs	Oneida	Sunbright	TOTAL
* Group A (as before)	100	139	151	126	25	31	10	9	541
** Group B (as before	26 (26%)	38 (20%)	34 (23%)	26 (21%)	9 (36%)	9 (29%)	7 (70%)	6 (67%)	155 (28%)
TOTAL	126	227	185	152	34	40	115	796	

* prorated on basis of 80% data

** only those high schools with 5 or more students in the sample are included.

A Chi-squared statistical analysis of this data showed that there was no significant difference among the eight feeder high schools listed in regard to relative attrition rates (when taken as a group), although there are some obvious trends evident.

While these were the only factors analyzed from the local data, a similar study conducted at a sister community college in Tennessee detected another statistically significant relationship. It was determined that a student's high school graduation status (wheiher regular or GED) was related to attrition, with the GED graduates being much more likely to withdraw and not re-enroll than regular graduates. This factor was not checked for the RSCC students, but it should be kept in mind as a part of the total attrition picture.

Tables VI and VII are summaries of the background data collected on the 198 nonreturnees.

TABLE VI

	Full-Time		Part-Time		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
A. Married	18	19	55	53	73	37
Single	76	81	49	47	125	63
B. Male	66	70	63	61	129	65
Female	28	30	41	39	69	35
C. Caucasian	90	95.7	100	96.2	190	95.9
Negro	3	3.2	4	3.8	7	3.5
Other	1	1.1	0	0.0	1	.5
D. Freshman	71	76	72	69	145	73
Sophomore	20	22	18	17	38	19
Special	3	2	14	14	15	8

A comparison of the part-time and full-time student reveals that only the

married/single and freshman/sophomore/special ratios are significantly different (at the .01 and .05 levels, respectively), while there is no significant difference in the racial and sex ratios.

TABLE VII

		Full-Time	Part-Time	Total
A.	Average Age			
	Male	21.5	29.0	25.2
	Female	21.0	29.2	25.8
	Total	21.3	29.1	25.4
B.	Average Hours			
	Attempted	26	14	20
C.	Average Hours			
	Earned	20	11	15
D.	Average GPA	1.71	1.52	1.62

Having little baseline data on the RSCC part-time student, one can only assume that the nonreturning part-time student is as representative of all part-time students as is the nonreturning full-time student (at least in terms of race, sex, marital status, etc.). The average nonreturning full-time student tends to be single, male, Caucasian, a freshman, 21 years old, with a rather low (1.71) GPA, while the average nonreturning part-time student tends to be married, male, Caucasian, a freshman, 29 years old, with an even lower (1.52) GPA. The GPA would indicate that academic problems may contribute to attrition at RSCC, although the overall GPA is not low enough to qualify for academic probation. A consideration of the expressed reasons for not returning (pages 10-13) sheds more light on the nature of this problem.

B. Survey Responses (Total Sample)

The ninety (90) former students responding to the survey instrument provided the following answers to the questions.

1. What is your present educational status?

3 (4%) Enrolled at a vocational-technical school or other postsecondary school: _____ Name of School

1 (1%) Enrolled at a community or junior college: _____ Name of School

17 (20%) Enrolled at a four-year college or university: _____ Name of School

65 (75%) Not enrolled in school

Twenty-five percent (25%) of the nonreturning students are continuing their education at the following schools - U.T.K. (12), U.T. Martin (1), Bryan College (2), ETSU (2), Volunteer State Community College (1), Tennessee Tech (2), Knoxville Area Vocational Schools (1), and a Manpower Training Program (1). These 21 students can hardly be considered "dropouts" by traditional standards.

2. If enrolled in school, are you considered a:

18 (86%) full-time student 3 (19%) part-time student

3. If not enrolled in school, do you have plans to enroll in the future?

47 (72%) Yes 18 (28%) No

There is a hopeful note in the fact that 72% of those students not presently enrolled do plan to enroll in the future. Of the 86 students answering the first question, then, 76% are either in school or plan to attend later. This reflects the "stop-in/stop-out" nature of our student population.

4. While at RSCC, what program or curriculum were you in?

34 (40%) College Transfer 32 (37%) Career Education 20 (23%) Was Undecided

5. While at RSCC, did you receive educational assistance under the "G.I." Bill?

15 (17%) Yes 72 (83%) No

This data is comparative to the proportion of veterans enrolled at RSCC during Fall Quarter, 1973.

6. Were you primarily a:
55 (63%) Day Student 32 (37%) Evening Student

These percentages compare favorably with the distribution of all day and evening students at RSCC.

7. Do you expect to re-enroll at RSCC?
30 (35%) Yes 34 (39%) No 23 (26%) Undecided

The re-enrollment potential of nonreturning students is good, with over one-third expecting to return. The "undecided" category is also a potential source of students which should be cultivated in future recruitment efforts. It appears that 30 of the 47 persons in question #3 are planning to return to Roane State.

8. Are you currently employed?
59 (69%) Yes 27 (31%) No

This question may be critical to an understanding of attrition, since the main factors involved in decisions to leave RSCC are all associated with employment problems, as discussed on pages 10-13.

9. Are you looking for employment?
20 (27%) Yes 53 (73%) No

There is no way to know whether the persons seeking work are those unemployed in question #8. There is either a sizeable unemployed group or else a dissatisfied group of employees among the respondents.

10. What were the main factors involved in your decision to leave RSCC?

18 (11%) Wanted to obtain full-time employment

7 (4%) Reached personal educational objective(s)

3	(2%)	Family moved out of the area
11	(7%)	Financial problems
16	(10%)	Family obligations or problems
6	(4%)	Medical/health problems
5	(3%)	Lack of adequate academic preparation
16	(10%)	Lack of effort or motivation on my part
8	(5%)	Educational needs weren't being met
2	(1%)	Disliked living at home
19	(11%)	Class schedule conflicted with employment schedule
6	(4%)	Dissatisfied with the curriculum
2	(1%)	Dissatisfied with the counseling/advising process
7	(4%)	Dissatisfied with the instruction
5	(3%)	Dissatisfied with the administration
5	(3%)	Dissatisfied with the social/cultural environment
2	(1%)	No longer interested in college
13	(8%)	Decided to attend another school
15	(9%)	Other (please specify) _____

The former students had the option of selecting more than one choice among the factors listed, and most of them checked two reasons. This information may be the most significant of the entire study, since it reveals the self-reported reason for leaving RSCC. The two main reasons mentioned, constituting 22% of all reasons, are concerned with employment problems. Students either had to leave school to get a full-time job or else could not combine a class and work schedule simultaneously. The high rankings of "family obligations or problems" and "financial problems" probably are further indications of

employment-related needs. For these students, then, academic problems were less important than other considerations, and they cannot be considered as traditional "dropouts."

If one views these responses in terms of three categories--(1) those RSCC has no control over, (2) those RSCC might have control over, and (3) those RSCC has definite control over--it seems that the majority of reasons fall into the first two classes. It is unreasonable to assume that attrition is primarily institution-caused, with so many factors involved. Attrition can be attacked and decreased but can probably never be eliminated.

There are institutional deficiencies pinpointed that should be closely examined, however. The whole employment/financial need area is one that should be considered in terms of Roane State's obligation and opportunity to serve the community. Dissatisfaction with various aspects of the college are low but not absent. The "open door" philosophy automatically commits a community college to deal with such expressed problems as "lack of adequate academic preparation."

The respondents did not fail to accept some responsibility for their leaving RSCC, with a tenth of the reasons given involving a "lack of effort or motivation" by the student. A low percentage of responses dealt specifically with academic problems, though a number of them are probably grade-related.

Highly specific reasons were listed in checklist form to prevent general and meaningless reasons like "low grades." While this tactic seemed to pay off, a considerable number of "other" responses were given, including the following:

* conflict with high school basketball schedule (a high school student)

* too far to travel (4)
* too many drugs at school (2)
* joined the Navy
* entered the mission field
* couldn't attend high school and college at the same time
* G.I. Bill expired
* not enough courses offered at Y-12

11. Did you consult an RSCC staff member about your reason(s) for leaving?
19 (24%) Yes 62 (76%) No

Considering the reasons given, it is unfortunate that so little contact was made with counselors, instructors, or administrators before leaving. Questions #22 and 23 reveal that most people felt reasonably free to discuss problems with instructors and counselors, so one can only speculate on the lack of contact with staff. A breakdown of responses by "day/evening" students further into the report reveals that evening students rarely consult anyone before leaving.

12. If you were an entering freshman again, would you choose to attend RSCC?
62 (80%) Yes 15 (20%) No

While no reasons are given, it is disturbing that 20% of these former students wouldn't attend Roane State again.

13. What was your educational goal when you first enrolled at RSCC?

33 (36%)	Completion of first two years of college transfer program.
14 (15%)	Completion of a two-year career-oriented program.
6 (7%)	Raise grade point average and transfer back to another school.
27 (29%)	Complete course(s) for personal skill or interest development.
3 (3%)	Sample college-level courses.
8 (9%)	No precise educational goal
2 (2%)	Other (please specify)

While community college students have been characterized by some as lacking well-defined goals, these responses indicate otherwise, with 91% indicating an entering goal. It is interesting that so many entered with the expectation of improving specific skills or developing personal interests, rather than completing full transfer or career programs. The very fact that about one-third of the respondents entered with a plan of attending on a short-term basis forces a re-evaluation of "dropouts."

14. Have you achieved the educational goal you hoped to attain when you first enrolled at RSCC?

7 (8%)	Yes, while at RSCC	16 (19%)	No, but presently pursuing
5 (6%)	Yes, since leaving RSCC	46 (54%)	No, but still plan to
6 (7%)	No, changed goal	5 (6%)	No, and no plans to

This question must be considered in light of the responses to question # 13, since 85 persons had goals and the same number answered this question. In attempting to develop an accurate picture of our attrition rate, it is essential

that we know to what extent our students' personal goals are achieved. Research studies indicate that the traditional concept of "dropout" is entirely inappropriate for community colleges, where students may enter with temporary and short-term goals. We have already seen that out of 238 originally identified nonreturnees, (1) 32 returned to RSCC Spring Quarter, (2) 21 are in school elsewhere, and (3) 47 plan to return to school in the future. That combination represents a minimum of 42% of the initial group and forces us to redefine "college dropout."

Fourteen percent (14%) of the respondents with entering goals have either achieved that goal while at RSCC or since they left in the fall. Ninety-four percent (94%) have either achieved their goal, changed goals, are pursuing it, or plan to attain it. Rather than measuring an institution's success in terms of graduates, transfers, employed, etc., another measure could be the degree of attainment of personal objectives on the part of students. Given the short period of time involved in this followup (6 months), it appears that few students have abandoned or changed their original goals.

15. What is your evaluation of the RSCC academic program options?

1	2	3	4
Excellent			Poor

Average Rating = 1.78

16. What is your evaluation of the RSCC Student Personnel Services (Counseling, Admissions, Financial Aid, etc.)?

1	2	3	4
Excellent			Poor

Average Rating = 1.74

17. What is your evaluation of the RSCC instructors, as a group?

1	2	3	4
Excellent			Poor

Average Rating = 1.70

18. What is your evaluation of the RSCC administration?

1	2	3	4
Excellent			Poor

Average Rating = 1.82

19. What is your evaluation of the RSCC physical facilities (building, equipment, etc.)?

1	2	3	4
Excellent			Poor

Average Rating = 1.48

20. What is your overall evaluation of RSCC as an educational institution?

1	2	3	4
Excellent			Poor

Average Rating = 1.70

This attitude/opinion question was designed to ascertain retrospective feelings about Roane State. As is often the case with student ratings, they tend to be highly positive. The relative ratings may be instructive, however, with the physical facilities receiving the highest and the administration the lowest ratings.

21. To what extent do you feel the classes at RSCC are and should be student-centered as compared to instructor-centered?
NOTE: Student-centered classes emphasize student interests, allow much freedom in choosing learning routes, stress field trips, independent study or projects, class discussion, group projects, and other activities. Instructor-centered classes are highly structured and geared to the instructor's judgment of what students should learn and how they should go about it, stress the lecture approach, etc.

Are Student-Centered			Are Instructor-Centered
1	2	3	4

Should be Student-Centered			Should be Instructor-Centered
1	2	3	4

It's possible that this question was difficult to interpret, due to its structure and length. The average response to the first part was 2.56, with the second part's average being 1.78. These nonreturning students apparently desire a more student-centered education than they perceived at RSCC.

22. Did you feel free to consult with your instructors at RSCC about personal or academic problems?

70 (83%) Yes 14 (17%) No

23. Did you feel free to consult with RSCC counselors about personal or academic problems?

58 (71%) Yes 24 (29%) No

These two questions should be considered together. The fact that so many of these students were part-time (53%) and/or evening (37%) students may account for the differential between instructors and counselors. In theory, there should be no difference in services provided for and attitudes produced in part-time and evening students. A later breakdown of responses by "college transfer/career education/undecided" students indicates that the "undecided" group constituted 50% of the "No" responses.

24. Were you satisfied with your opportunities to progress at your own speed in accordance with your abilities and academic background?

68 (78%) Yes 19 (12%) No

25. Are there any additional comments you would like to make?

The respondents were generally cooperative in adding comments, including the following positive ones.

* I find instructors so very interested in pupil progress.
* In my 14+ years of education the only effective counselors I ever had were those at RSCC.
* Roane State has the potential of being an excellent college.
* I can't wait for Congress to act so I can return in September.

* Looking forward to returning.

* I am proud of my attendance at RSCC.

* Was very pleased with progress and opportunities at RSCC.

Not all comments were so complimentary, however.

* I think a great deal of improvement could be brought where it concerns buying books at RSCC--big hassle!

* I never received information pertaining to beginning of each quarter (i.e. registration date, courses available, etc.).

* There is so much sin at RSCC people need to turn it all over to Jesus and he'll straighten their lives out.

* Some classes are alright, but others go along too fast and it's hard to keep up.

* Not enough emphasis on night classes for people who are employed full-time in the day.

* --expletive deleted--RSCC can do better than---as an---teacher.

* Need to offer nursing program.

* This school strikes me as money hungry.

* My instructor dropped my grade a letter because of absences even though I always managed to do my work and turn it in on time. My absences were due to working full-time and driving the distance to and from school.

* The school, to me, is run on a high school level.

* The energy crisis had some bearing on my not returning to school.

C. Survey Responses (Transfer, Career, Undecided)

In order to provide a more complete analysis of the non-returning student, this section breaks out the responses of those 33 persons who indicated in question #4 that they had been in a College Transfer program, as well as the 34 in Career Education and 21 who had been undecided. Their respective responses

to questions # 1,3,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,22,23, and 24 were statistically analyzed via a Chi-squared technique, with only questions #13 and 23 being significant (at the .01 level).

Question #13 dealt with educational goals upon entering RSCC, and one would expect these groups to have different goals. The responses are shown below:

	College Transfer	Career Education	Undecided
Completion of first two years of a college transfer program.....	20	6	6
Completion of a two-year career-oriented program.....	0	14	1
Raise grade point average and transfer back to another school.....	5	1	0
Complete course(s) for personal skill or interest development.....	5	11	4
Sample college-level courses.....	0	0	1
No precise educational goal.....	0	1	7
Other.....	2	1	2

Question #23 dealt with the perceived freedom of communication with RSCC counselors concerning personal or academic problems, with the following responses:

23. Did you feel free to consult with RSCC counselors about personal or academic problems?

	Yes	No
College Transfer	24	7
Career Education	26	6
Undecided	9	12

Unfortunately, the student who was undecided about an academic program and needed guidance the most was also least likely to seek that help from counselors. Interestingly, these students didn't feel the same reticence about consulting with their instructors at RSCC, as indicated by the following responses to question #22.

22. Did you feel free to consult with your instructors at RSCC about personal or academic problems?

	Yes	No
College Transfer	26	5
Career Education	28	5
Undecided	14	7

This data points out the importance of faculty members in the overall guidance process. One might hypothesize that these undecided students were evening attenders, but there was no statistically significant trend in that direction.

D. Survey Responses (Day, Evening)

This section analyzes the differences in the responses of 54 former day and 32 evening students. Questions #3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 22, 23, and 24 were analyzed for statistical significance, with questions #11, 13, and 14 qualifying.

11. Did you consult an RSCC staff member about your reason(s) for leaving? (significant at .05 level)

	Yes	No
Day	14 (27%)	37
Evening	[illegible]%)	29

This data suggests that there is not the same opportunity for evening students to consult with someone about withdrawing from school that there is for day students.

On the other hand, there were no significant differences in their responses to questions #22 and 23 dealing with freedom to consult with instructors or counselors. Evening students just may be more independent and less likely to ask anyone's advice on anything than would a day student.

13. What was your educational goal when you first enrolled at RSCC? (significant at .01 level)

	Day	Evening
Completion of first two years of a college transfer program.....	26	6
Completion of a two-year career-oriented program.....	11	3
Raise grade point average and transfer back to another school	6	0
Complete course(s) for personal skill or interest development	5	16
Sample college-level courses.....	0	1
No precise educational goal	4	4
Other	3	2

Differences in responses would normally be expected from this question, due to the inherent nature of day and evening students and programs.

14. Have you achieved the educational goal you hoped to attain when you first enrolled at RSCC? (significant at .01 level)

	Day	Evening
Yes, while at RSCC	5	3
Yes, since leaving RSCC	5	0
No, changed goal	6	0

	Day	Evening
No, but presently pursuing	14	2
No, but still plan to	22	20
No, and no plans to	0	5

The only former students to abandon their educational goals were five evening students. One must assume that those factors causing these students to enroll in the evening must still be limiting their progress toward educational goals.

IV. SUMMARY

The following items describe the 198 nonreturnees identified for study:

1. RSCC had an overall attrition rate of 25% Fall Quarter.
2. Part-time students were more likely to withdraw than full-time students, (sig. at .01 level).
3. 42% of those students officially withdrawing from school returned to RSCC within two quarters.
4. 13% of all nonreturnees returned to RSCC within two quarters.
5. There were no statistically significant differences in attrition rates by high school attended, race, or sex.
6. At least 42% of all nonreturnees are either presently in school or plan to return.
7. Nonreturning students don't appear very different from returning ones, with the exception of part-time/full-time ratios.
8. Part-time and full-time nonreturnees did differ significantly in their (1) marital status (.01 level), and (2) freshman/sophomore/special classifications (.05 level).

After questionnaires were mailed to the 198 former students, the following major responses were received, based on a 49% return.

1. 25% of the respondents are currently enrolled in school.

2. 72% of the others plan to enroll in the future, with 64% of those expecting to re-enter RSCC.

3. 69% are employed.

4. The main reasons given for leaving RSCC were (1) conflict between class and work schedules, (2) desire for full-time work, (3) family obligations, and (4) lack of personal motivation.

5. 76% of the respondents had consulted with no one at RSCC about their reason(s) for leaving.

6. Low levels of dissatisfaction with various aspects of RSCC were expressed.

7. 20% indicated they would not enter RSCC if they were freshmen again.

8. The major educational goals of entering respondents were (1) completion of first two years of a college transfer program, (2) completion of individual courses for personal skill or interest development, and (3) completion of a two-year occupational program.

9. 14% have achieved their original educational goal, and 80% have either changed their goal, are now pursuing it, or plan to do so.

10. Student evaluations of various aspects of RSCC were quite favorable.

11. Respondents felt that classes should be more student-centered than they are now perceived to be.

12. Most respondents felt free to consult with RSCC instructors and counselors about their problems.

Analyzing the responses by "college transfer, career education, and undecided" categories (question #4), these responses were important:

1. The three groups differed significantly (.01 level) in their responses to question #13, dealing with entering educational goals.

2. They also differed significantly (.01 level) in their responses to question #23, dealing with freedom of communication with RSCC counselors.

Analyzing the responses by "day, evening" categories (question 6), these responses seemed important:

1. The two groups differed significantly (.05 level) in responses to question #11, dealing with their having consulted with an RSCC staff member about reasons for leaving.

2. They differed significantly (.01 level) in responses to question #13, dealing with entering educational goals.

3. They also differed significantly (.01 level) in their responses to question #14, dealing with the attainment of educational goals.

If one takes the 238 original nonreturnees as a measure of attrition, then RSCC had a 25% rate for Fall Quarter. When one deletes the graduates, deceased, returnees to RSCC within two quarters, those in school elsewhere, and those who plan to return to school, then a "real" dropout rate of only about 5% is realized. This figure corresponds closely to the 2% "dropout" percentage in a Florida Community College Follow-up Study conducted by the Inter-Institutional Research Council.[7]

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Having carefully studied this group of 238 nonreturning students, it seems that about 81% of them either were graduates, deceased, were in school elsewhere, had returned to RSCC within two quarters, or else plan to return to school. Few can be considered "college dropouts" in the traditional sense, so it would be inappropriate to become overly concerned with overall attrition rates. Rather than adopting some

massive program or strategy to combat "dropouts", it seems wiser to improve and expand our present services to those growing groups most likely to be moving in and out of Roane State -- namely the part-time and evening student. The following recommendations deal with this problem as well as others stimulated by the study.

1. A study similar to this one should be conducted periodically to monitor attrition rates.

2. A separate follow-up study should be conducted on all RSCC graduates. This is planned by the Director of Institutional Research during 1974-75.

3. The Administrative Council should include an item on its agenda concerning the growing numbers of part-time and evening students, their special needs, and ways to more effectively serve them.

4. RSCC should capitalize on our students' "stopout" tendencies and re-enrollment potential in its recruiting and public relations efforts.

5. A quarterly computer printout of nonreturning students should be made available. After deleting graduates, deceased, etc., these former students could be mailed class schedules and other information to encourage their return.

6. Special attention should be given in orientation, guidance, and placement efforts to those students coming to RSCC from those high schools with a history of high attrition rates (i.e. Oneida, Sunbrignt, Spring City).

7. RSCC should offer a greater variety of classes in the afternoon and evening to alleviate the reported conflicts in class and work schedules.

8. The present emphasis on available financial aid should be continued, with an increased stress placed on a centralized part-time and full-time employment referral/ placement service.

9. Cooperative arrangements with local day care centers could allow more housewives with family obligations to attend RSCC. This cooperation could include joint advertising of a program whereby mothers could leave their children at no cost in return for working several hours per week at the center.

10. The change of registration process described on p. 31 of the college catalog should be clarified to distinguish between the first week's "add" period and the quarter-long "drop" period.

11. A counselor should be made available to evening students, at least on a regular part-time basis. This is already planned for 1974-75.

REFERENCES

[1] Higher Education for Everybody? Issues and Implications (Washington's American Council on Education, 1970). p. 26.

[2] John E. Rouche, George A. Baker III, and Richard L. Brownell, Accountability and The Community College (Washington: American Association of Junior Colleges, 1971), p. 11.

[3] Ibid., p. 12.

[4] James L. Wattenbarger, "I.R.C.'s Follow-Up Study Redefines Community College "Dropouts," I.R.C. News and Notes, pp. 1-2, Fall, 1973.

[5] "Dropping Out," The Open Door Newsletter, p. 2, July, 1974.

[6] Ralph W. Hahn, "In Defense of Dropping Out," Community College Review, Vol. 1(4): 35-40, Winter, 1974.

[7] Wattenbarger, loc. cit.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

STUDENT FOLLOWUP STUDY

APPENDIX A

Please answer as completely and honestly as you can all questions which apply to you. Do not identify yourself in any way. Thank you very much.

1. What is your present educational status?
   _____Enrolled at a vocational-technical school or other postsecondary school: _____
   Name of School
   _____Enrolled at a community or junior college: _____
   Name of School
   _____Enrolled at a four-year college or university: _____
   Name of School
   _____Not enrolled in school.

2. If enrolled in school, are you considered a:
   _____full-time student _____part-time student

3. If not enrolled in school, do you have plans to enroll in the future?
   _____Yes _____No

4. While at RSCC, what program or curriculum were you in?
   _____College Transfer _____Career Education _____Was undecided

5. While at RSCC, did you receive educational assistance under the "G.I. Bill"?
   _____Yes _____No

6. Were you primarily a: _____Day Student _____Evening Student

7. Do you expect to re-enroll at RSCC? _____Yes _____No _____Undecided

8. Are you currently employed? _____Yes _____No

9. Are you looking for employment? _____Yes _____No

10. What were the main factors involved in your decision to leave RSCC?
    _____Wanted to obtain full-time employment
    _____Reached personal educational objective(s)
    _____Family moved out of area
    _____Financial problems
    _____Family obligations or problems
    _____Medical/health problems
    _____Lack of adequate academic preparation
    _____Lack of effort or motivation on my part
    _____Educational needs weren't being met
    _____Disliked living at home
    _____Class schedule conflicted with employment schedule
    _____Dissatisfied with the curriculum
    _____Dissatisfied with the counseling/advising process
    _____Dissatisfied with the instruction
    _____Dissatisfied with the administration
    _____Dissatisfied with the social/cultural environment
    _____No longer interested in college
    _____Decided to attend another school
    _____Other (please specify) _____

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

11. Did you consult an RSCC staff member about your reason(s) for leaving?
_____Yes _____No

12. If you were an entering freshman again, would you choose to attend RSCC?
_____Yes _____No

13. What was your educational goal when you first enrolled at RSCC?
_____Completion of first two years of a college transfer program.
_____Completion of a two-year career-oriented program.
_____Raise grade point average and transfer back to another school.
_____Complete course(s) for personal skill or interest development.
_____Sample college-level courses.
_____No precise educational goal.
_____Other (please specify) _____

14. Have you achieved the educational goal you hoped to attain when you first enrolled at RSCC?
_____Yes, while at RSCC _____No, but presently pursuing
_____Yes, since leaving RSCC _____No, but still plan to
_____No, changed goal _____No, and no plans to

15. What is your evaluation of the RSCC academic program options? (Circle One)
1 Excellent 2 3 4 Poor

16. What is your evaluation of the RSCC Student Personnel services (Counseling, Admissions, Financial Aid, etc.)?
1 Excellent 2 3 4 Poor

17. What is your evaluation of the RSCC instructors, as a group?
1 Excellent 2 3 4 Poor

18. What is your evaluation of the RSCC administration?
1 Excellent 2 3 4 Poor

19. What is your evaluation of the RSCC physical facilities (building, equipment, etc.)?
1 Excellent 2 3 4 Poor

20. What is your overall evaluation of RSCC as an educational institution?
1 Excellent 2 3 4 Poor

21. To what extent do you feel the classes at RSCC are and should be student-centered as compared to instructor-centered?
NOTE: Student-centered classes emphasize student interests, allow much freedom in choosing learning routes, stress field trips, independent study or projects class discussion, group projects, and other activities. Instructor-centered classes are highly structured and geared to the instructor's judgment of what students should learn and how they should go about it, stress the lecture approach, etc.

Are Student-Centered			Are Instructor-Centered
1	2	3	4
Should be Student-Centered			**Should be Instructor-Centered**
1	2	3	4

22. Did you feel free to consult with your instructors at RSCC about personal or academic problems?
_____Yes _____No

23. Did you feel free to consult with RSCC counselors about personal or academic problems?
_____Yes _____No

24. Were you satisfied with your opportunities to progress at your own speed in accordance with your abilities and academic background?
_____Yes _____No

25. Are there any additional comments you would like to make?

ROANE STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

May 31, 1974

Dear

Will you take a few minutes of your time to help Roane State with an important task? According to our records, you were a student at RSCC during the Fall Quarter, 1973 but did not re-enroll either Winter or Spring Quarters. We are interested in surveying all students in this category to obtain information which will allow us to improve our service to the community. Your answers will be kept in strict confidence, as you need not identify yourself in any way.

Your assistance in this followup project will be greatly appreciated. Please complete the attached questionnaire and return it in the envelope provided by June 17.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Fred H. Martin

Fred H. Martin, Director
Institutional Research

mf

Enclosures

HARRIMAN, TENNESSEE 37748 · TELEPHONE 354-3000 ·

ROANE STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

June 21, 1974

Dear :

About two weeks ago we mailed you a survey and asked for your help in determining (1) why students leave Roane State Community College, (2) their present status, and (3) their impressions of RSCC. This information will allow us to improve our service to future students like yourself.

In case you have misplaced the survey or have just forgotten about it, we are enclosing another copy and a self-addressed, prepaid envelope. Would you take a few minutes to complete and return it by July 1, 1974?

Thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,

Fred H. Martin, Director
Institutional Research

ea

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

JUL 12 1975

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGE
INFORMATION

HARRIMAN, TENNESSEE 37748 · TELEPHONE 354-3000 ·